

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:FMDICKMAN:BH

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 241889

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BA

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST FORCE STATUS

REFS: (A) MANAMA 1138; (B) STATE 234240

1. DEPARTMENT REGRETS IT INADVERTENTLY FAILED TO MENTION IN REF. B THAT TEXT OF PUBLIC RESPONSE ON QUESTION OF MIDEASTFOR REMOVAL, WHICH WAS POSTED FOR REPORTERS ON SEPTEMBER 30, WAS AGREED TO DURING A MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 29 IN NEW YORK BETWEEN GOB FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH MUHAMMAD AND NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON. IN DISCUSSING FUTURE OF MIDEASTFOR, MR. ATHERTON ALSO REVIEWED CHOICES WE WERE CONSIDERING IN HOW TO RESPOND TO GOB'S NOTE OF AUGUST 12 SETTING FORTH JUNE 1977 DEADLINE ON MIDEASTFOR. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD INDICATED THAT HIS STRONG PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO HAVE A LOW-KEY JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT ON MIDEASTFOR'S TERMINATION.

2. IN DISCUSSING MIDEASTFOR, MR. ATHERTON ALSO REVIEWED POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WE SAW IN OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR PAYING A MUCH HIGHER RENT FOR THE NAVY'S USE OF BAHRAINI FACILITIES AND FOR OUR REQUEST FOR
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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN VIEW OF MIDEASTFOR'S

EXPECTED SHORT TENURE. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SHOWED UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFICULTIES ADMINISTRATION COULD HAVE OVER

RENT BUT HOPED THAT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WOULD NOT BE LINKED TO MIDEASTFOR'S CONTINUED PRESENCE.

3. MEETING ALSO PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR MR. ATHERTON TO REVIEW MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SINAI AGREEMENT, U.S. INTENTIONS REGARDING USE OF MASIRAH ISLAND, ISRAEL'S REQUEST TO BUY PERSHING MISSILES, AND OUR INTEREST IN GOB SUPPORT FOR RESOLUTION ON KOREA AT UNGA. MEMCON HAS BEEN POUCHED.
KISSINGER

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